

## THE PLEASURE OF THE TEXT

i like my job: i like to teach,  
and i like the place i teach at.  
i think i have to work  
a little bit too hard,  
but a lot of people in the world work harder.

i get paid, basically,  
to read and to write,  
and i always wanted  
to do both anyway.

i like my kids,  
and they seem to be doing fine.  
when i sense they are happy,  
i am overjoyed.

my wife and i profess not to like  
each other very much,  
but we've been abusing each other  
in such earnestness for fourteen years.  
we've learned not to need each other much,  
not to care much what the other thinks.

i am not without sex.  
sometimes i think i need more sex  
than i am getting,  
but maybe i'm flattering myself.

i'm not a famous writer,  
but since i have not forgotten  
what it is like to be absolutely unknown,  
i'm glad there's been at least some progress.

i think i wish my aches and pains  
did not prevent me from getting much exercise,  
but maybe i'm lucky  
to have the excuse.

i came home after my night class  
to see my kids before bedtime.  
they were watching a christmas cartoon.  
i poured myself a cheap wine  
that i happen to like a lot.  
it hit my stomach

and made me feel even better.

now my wife is putting herself  
and the kids to sleep.  
i'll pour another drink,



write this poem,  
see if there's a decent movie on the cable.  
i've been getting enormous pleasure,  
for instance, from the foreign movies  
on the bravo channel:  
the last metro, the harder they come,  
medium cool, breaker morant, diva.  
also, on a local station,  
i saw for the umpteenth time the wild bunch,  
with its ants and scorpions,  
its honor among thieves,  
its maniacally affirmative laughter  
in the face of the void.

a woman said she got more out of life  
than was ever in it.  
i get more than i deserve.

near midnight i'll drive to the "honeybucket"  
to drink till two with ray and millie  
and murray and fred and bob and chris and gary  
and steve and jill and boak and jeff and nicky  
and anyone else who cares to join us.

i don't want to have a headache in the morning  
but if i do i'll get rid of it with excedrin,  
and if the excedrin gives me heartburn,  
i'll get rid of the heartburn with maalox.

after all, i have an obligation to play santa claus  
at the english department party tomorrow noon.

i suppose if i really got down to it  
i could think of ways  
to change my life for the better.

but, for now, it will do.

-- Gerald Locklin

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